GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2083
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2000
CLOSING OF INDO NEPAL BORDER
DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI;UTTAMRAO NATHUJI DHIKALE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Nepal Government has rejected the suggestions of Indian Government that its border with India will be closed and border crossing be permitted with passports in view of the Indian Airlines plane hijacking from Kathmandu;

(b) if so, the details of suggestions made by the Indian Government in this regard and the reasons why these suggestions have been rejected by the Nepal Government;

(c) whether the Pakistani ISI agents are taking advantage of the existing opportunities and are using this border for terrorists activities;

(d) if so, whether both Nepal and India have discussed this matter thoroughly and have decided to work jointly to check the ISI activities which are creating trouble in India; and

(e) if so, the extent to which Nepal has taken steps to check the activities of ISI and other terrorist organisations using Nepal as a base for anti-Indian operations?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) & (b) At the third meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Working Group on Border Management held in Kathmandu from February 1-3, 2000, the two sides discussed the possibility of introducing a passport system, without the requirement of visa, for the purpose of identification of nationality of Indian and Nepalese citizens travelling by air between the two countries. Till such time that the modalities for the operationalisation of this system are firmed up, it was agreed to scrutinise and reduce the types of photo-identification documents that would be valid for air travel and notify each other of the revised list of such documents.

(c), (d) & (e) The Government of India have discussed from time to time with the Government of Nepal our concerns about the ISI misusing the Nepalese territory and the open India-Nepal border for activities inimical to India`s interest. Reports received by the Government indicate increasing evidence of ISI using Nepal as a staging post for terrorist activities directed against India.The Nepalese Government have been sensitised on this issue.

Measures have been taken to enhance cooperation with Nepal, particularly with regard to implementing effective border management. The concerned agencies of the two Governments remain in regular touch to coordinate efforts to tackle this problem. There are also bilateral institutional mechanisms, such as the Joint Working Group on Border Management and Home Secretary level talks, which have been evolved to specifically develop cooperation on security matters and to address these concerns. In pursuance of the decisions taken in these meetings, both sides have agreed to jointly coordinate measures to prevent misuse of the open India-Nepal border for activities directed against India. On their part, the Government of Nepal have assured that their territory would not be used for activities inimical to India`s interest and have been extending their cooperation to the Government of India in this regard.